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AUTHOR Board, Mary Ann; And Others
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ABSTRACT

The final manual of a series on attendant care for severely disabled persons is intended to help persons with a disability to hire and manage personal care attendants (PCAs). Models--private and shared systems--are reviewed, and advantages and disadvantages of each noted. Suggestions for interviewing and hiring PCAs include guidelines for advertising and areas for training PCAs. Character types of PCAs as well as of people with disabilities are listed and situations are described to analyze behaviors with possible consequences. The importance of adequate back-up systems is stressed. A concluding section considers ways to terminate one's PCA. A functional assessment form and a short list of resources conclude the document. (CL)

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A Guide for the Person With A Disability

Mary Ann Board Jean A. Cole Lex Frieden Jane C. Sperry

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photography by Gordon Stanley

for information, contact:

ILRU
The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research
1333 Moursund Avenue
Houston, Texas 77030

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The authors would also like to thank the many disabled people who were interviewed in preparation for this publication. Their willingness to discuss issues surrounding their own attendant care plus their enthusiastic support of this project indicated the need for printed information about this subject.

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Mary Ann Board
Jean A. Cole
Lex Frieden
Jane C. Sperry

INDEPENDENT LIVING WITH ATTENDANT CARE: A Guide For the Person With A Disability

Introduction

For many severely disabled people, the key to being able to live independently is securing and maintaining attendant care. For most severely disabled people, independent living could not be realized at all without the physical assistance provided by personal care attendants (PCA's). What are personal care attendants and how are they different from nurses, nurses' aides, or even your parents who might also be assisting you in your personal care? Personal care attendants are people hired by you to assist you with your activities of daily living. Unlike professional aides such as nurses, PCA's do not have specific and set ways of doing tasks but instead, take directions from you. Sometimes parents have an annoying way of taking over control of your life without any input from you. In contrast, PCA's depend upon your input to help them do their job in the most satisfactory way for you. The concept of independent living is based upon the notion that the handicapped individual has the right to make his own decisions and to have control over the direction of his life. Directing your own care with the assistance of a personal care attendant is a prime example of this concept in action.

This booklet is intended to provide you with information regarding the hiring and management of personal care attendants. Much of the data and comments reflected in this presentation is the result of personal experiences related by handicapped people who are currently living on their own and who have used PCA's in a variety of settings and situations. Still other information was gathered from PCA's themselves. The Attendant Management Module taught in the New Options Transitional Living program, The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research, Houston, Texas, provided a model for teaching and learning about PCA's and their relationships with handicapped individuals.

This booklet will examine several major areas in attendant management: (1) *Models of Providing Attendant Care,* (2) *Interviewing and Hiring the PCA,* (3) *The Relationship Between the Handicapped Person and The PCA* (4) *Back-up Systems* and (5) *Terminating the PCA.* It is hoped that you will benefit from the experiences related and that you will consider all of the options available in using PCA's to increase your own opportunities in independent living.

MODELS OF ATTENDANT CARE

There are a number of attendant arrangements for disabled people who want to live more independently. Basically, the models can be classified as: (1) *private* or (2) *shared* attendant systems.

1) *Private Attendant Systems*

One-to-one attendant situations occur most frequently in three settings: with a handicapped person who is living alone in an integrated apartment complex or a house in a residential neighborhood, with a handicapped person who is living with his family or spouse and who has outside help for activities of daily living, and in a college dormitory situation where the attendant might also be the disabled person's roommate. In each of these settings, the disabled individual is generally responsible for hiring, supervising, and terminating his own PCA.

2) *Shared Attendant Systems*

Another option which is becoming available in several communities across the country is clustered living arrangements. Groups of handicapped people with similar attendant needs live within close proximity to each other (for instance, in the same apartment complex), and attendant services are contracted for the entire group. A handicapped person might work with two or more attendants in one day, and PCA's are usually available 24 hours per day. Most systems of this type maintain a full-time staff attendant manager who is responsible for scheduling and supervising the PCA's. Some clusters manage their attendant systems through a board of directors and/or a grievance committee. Shared attendant systems imply that residents share responsibility for hiring, supervising and terminating PCA's.

There are several advantages and disadvantages with each system. Handicapped people who prefer the private attendant system maintain that they have more control in choosing a PCA who is compatible with their particular set of circumstances. Disabled individuals in a shared attendant system often feel more secure knowing a PCA is available throughout the day. The private attendant system allows more choices in living arrangements for the handicapped person while the shared attendant system is usually available in a specific location such as an apartment complex. Some handicapped people prefer the friendships and closeness of living around others with similar disabilities and needs; on the other hand, some disabled people feel more comfortable living alone and enjoy interacting with able-bodied neighbors. In a shared attendant system problems might be easier to solve when approached by a group because more solutions are generated. These are just a few of the considerations in choosing one type of arrangement over another. Ultimately, you will be the one to decide on the system that will enable you to participate fully in independent living.

INTERVIEWING AND HIRING PCA'S

Where to Find Potential PCA's

Before discussing interviewing techniques, it seems logical to first examine the ways and means of locating potential employees. This step involves knowing what you are looking for and then advertising in the appropriate publications and/or agencies. Even the wording of your ad is important in appealing to the type of individual you are looking for.

These are some of the questions that must be answered before you begin the hiring process.

1) Are you looking for full-time or part-time help?

2) When do you require the most assistance, i.e., at peak hours (morning and evening) or consistently throughout the day and evening? Examine your personal daily routine to determine your individual needs.

3) Do you want the PCA to provide his own transportation or to live on or near a bus line? Or do you prefer to have your attendant live with you such as in a university dormitory?

4) What are your transportation needs? Do you want the PCA to have a driver's license and to be able to drive for you?

5) Do you prefer a male or female PCA or does it matter?

6) Is the age of the PCA important to you? Strength (that is, ability to lift, turn, etc.)? How about race? Religious affiliation?

7) Do you want the PCA to perform only physical care tasks or do you also need homemaker services such as cooking and household cleaning?

8) What are your financial resources to pay for attendant services?

It is also important that you examine your priorities in having a PCA. Do you want an employee exclusively? Or are you looking for a friend, companion, housekeeper, and/or substitute mother who will take care of all your needs with little decision-making on your part? Knowing the type of person you are looking for will require you to carefully examine your own values as well as your motivations for wanting to live independently. Additionally, this initial self-examination will help you avoid conflict with your attendant later in your relationship (see section on **The Relationship Between the Handicapped Individual and the PCA).**

Once you answer these questions and know what attributes you are looking for, then you are ready to write your ad. In the ad, you should give just enough information to attract qualified prospects without being too wordy or turning people off because of unrealistic expectations.

Here are some possibilities:

WANTED: dependable person to provide physical care assistance to handicapped adult 6-9 pm M-F. Salary: $3.25/hour. Call Jim at 000-0000.

or

WANTED: Female to assist in personal care activities of physically disabled adult; full-time; light housekeeping and cooking required. Salary: $125/week. Call Jill at 000-0000.

Placing Your Ad

Many handicapped people have an elaborate communication network for locating attendants. Depending on the size of your community, you may or may not want to advertise in your local newspaper. Several disabled people have related that in a very large city, they have had little response when advertising in the city newspaper. They prefer to advertise in more localized publications such as neighborhood newsletters. Here is a list of possible places to post your ad:

City newspapers
College newspapers
College employment offices
Neighborhood newspapers or newsletters
Church bulletins
Employment agencies
College dormitory bulletin boards
Library bulletin boards
Supermarket bulletin boards
Ethnic newspapers
YMCA/YWCA bulletin boards
Vocational rehabilitation agencies
Hospital bulletin boards
Organizations that provide services to handicapped people
Consumer organizations for handicapped people

In addition to placing ads in various locations, handicapped people also rely on word-of-mouth to make their need for a PCA known. They might talk to friends, neighbors, co-workers, relatives, medical personnel, social workers, other attendants, and other handicapped people. Even if these people aren't able to help directly, they might be able to give you some good leads.

Interviewing

Once you have located one or two potential candidates through your ad campaign, it is important that the two of you meet face-to-face to determine if you will be able to work together. The interview has several purposes:

1) to allow you to assess the skills of the potential PCA through questioning and/or demonstration,
2) to allow the candidate to assess your specific needs,
3) to assess personalities and ability to work together.

In an actual interview, some people ask the potential PCA to complete an application form; others feel that this step is too formal and prefer to conduct an interview through informal conversation. Although you should never rely on an application form alone, a combination of a form and a face-to-face conversation would probably yield the most information. Through the interviewing process, you can double check the information recorded on the application. The types of items that should be included on an application form could include such things as previous work experience, health record, convictions, type of transportation, driving record, and references.

The following interviewing issues and techniques were compiled by disabled people who participated in the New Options program at The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research in Houston, Texas. They reflect areas of importance to handicapped people who have used PCA's for a number of years.

1) **Personality is very important.** Think in advance about the kinds of personality traits that are important to you. Does the applicant appear to be passive, aggressive, or somewhere in between? How does this relate to the type of personality that you have?

2) **Discuss previous work record**—dependability, how long the person stayed on the job, salary, responsibility, how he got along with other employees, how he got along with supervisors. The answers to these questions will give you some idea of the applicant's *reliability* which all handicapped people who were interviewed in preparation for this publication consider to be the number one consideration and the most important trait a PCA should have.

3) **Discuss personal history, convictions, driving record, health record, and drug and drinking problems in detail.** It has been the experience of some disabled people to find that their medication, especially Valium, disappears quickly with some PCA's. Still others have reported personal belongings or liquor missing. In addition to theft, reliability is an issue with PCA's who drink excessively or use drugs.

4) **Discuss modes of transportation in detail,** including backup systems for those inevitable occurrences of car trouble or broken-down buses. Some disabled people hesitate to hire a PCA who lives more than 5-10 miles away because of the increased likelihood of transportation problems.

5) **Discuss job tasks in detail** including the time required for each task. Be specific about bowel care, bladder care, dressing, transfers, showers, etc. This is often the most difficult part of an interview because of a reluctance on the part of the handicapped person to discuss such intimate, personal aspects of his/her daily routine. The best way to approach these topics is in a matter-of-fact way with the attitude that no matter how much you would like things to be different, this is the way things are, this is the reality. There are several ways to approach intimate subjects with a PCA candidate.

You can start by saying something like: "Two of the areas in which I need help are bowel and bladder care. This involves cleaning my catheter and legbags daily to prevent infection. My bowel program takes place every other day using suppositories and a commode chair." Additionally, you will likely have to clarify some terminology, (such as "catheter") if the PCA is not medically oriented. Remember that a potential PCA will probably be uncomfortable about talking about these areas, too. You can help put him/her at ease by being clear, matter-of-fact, maintaining good eye contact, and remaining calm. You will only increase the tension if you are fidgety, look at the floor or ceiling, or fail to explain your situation fully.

6) **Discuss hours, rate of pay, time off, and weekend responsibilities.** Also, let the candidate know how he/she will be paid, i.e. through a third party payer such as a state agency or a direct compensation from you.

7) **Ask open-ended questions** (those that can't be answered with a yes or no). For example, an open-ended question would be, "Why would you like this job?" rather than, "Would you like this job?". You will get much more information from open-ended questions. The more information you have, the better your decision will be.

8) Finally, at some point in the hiring process, you should **check the applicant's references.** This will give you the benefit of others' perceptions of the individual and will prevent you from having a one-sided and perhaps distorted picture of the applicant.

Training

Since you are a unique individual with special needs and established routines, you will probably want to train your PCA yourself. Sometimes, though, a demonstration is clearer than a verbal explanation; if this is the case, you might want to ask the person who usually provides your care to be present the first couple of working times with your PCA. It is important that you do not make assumptions about the knowledge base of the PCA. One handicapped person related that he once ended up on the floor because he assumed his new PCA knew how to help him transfer from his bed to his wheelchair. Explain your routine fully and in detail.

Another area that needs to be discussed early in the relationship is emergency procedures. In general there are two types of emergencies you should be concerned about. One type is a routine emergency such as a deep cut or a fall requiring a standard first aid procedure. The other type is an emergency directly associated with your particular disability. The latter type of emergency might require that a PCA have some specialized knowledge about your disability and the kinds of emergencies you might be prone to. For example, if you have a spinal cord injury, the PCA should be familiar with dysreflexia and how to treat it. If you have a neurological disorder the PCA should know something about seizures. In all cases, the PCA should know the names and phone numbers of your doctor, an ambulance service, the fire department, your pharmacy, and your closest relative or friend.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOU AND A PCA

Good or bad relationships with your attendant depend to a large extent on the mix of values, motives, and personalities of both you and your PCA. Depending upon the setting and the type of attendant care you subscribe to (one-to-one vs. shared), you will find yourself in numerous situations which will probably cause anxiety, tension or confict between you and your PCA. One reason for this is the fact that you and your PCA do not have exactly the same personality type nor do you share exactly the same values. Knowing your own values and being aware of the qualities you admire in other people will help you realize your abilities to get along with and to work with a variety of people.

The following character types are presented to illustrate specific traits you might recognize in PCA's, your friends, your family, or even yourself. The traits are not exclusive to any one individual; that is, every person exhibits numerous characteristics in his daily interactions with different people. There are many variables that affect the way you communicate at any given time including the way you feel, the weather, problems you're worried about, or impressions you hope to make. The illustrations below present an analysis of a few types of behaviors along with the possible consequences of each behavior.

Attendant Character Types

1) **The NURSE:** these are people who have developed their own medical techniques and refuse to do a task any other way. They direct the handicapped person's care rather than the disabled person assuming responsibility for his/her own care.

2) **The "MOTHER":** the attendants feel their job is to take care of disabled people and to nurture them. This is the type of person who hovers sweetly, pats disabled people on the head or arm, and does things that are not needed.

3) **The BEST FRIEND/COMPANION:** the attendant allows no privacy for the handicapped person and refuses to allow him/her to have other social relationships. This attendant would probably expect to be included in all social activities planned by the disabled individual and indeed, would be hurt if left out.

4) **The OVERPROTECTOR:** this person's creed is "I know what's best for you." The attendant might try to prevent the handicapped person from taking even minor risks, thus encouraging a dependent relationship.

5) **The GOOD SAMARITAN:** the attendant is a "do-gooder" whose primary objective is to make himself/herself feel needed. This person's creed might be "you've suffered enough already, let me take care of you." The GOOD SAMARITAN will do more for you than is necessary and may treat you like a child.

6) **The DRUG ABUSER:** these attendants may do a good job when they are not "spaced out." They are usually unreliable and/or inconsistent in behavior.

7) **The PREACHER:** these individuals insist upon imposing their religious beliefs upon the handicapped individual. Some attendants have reportedly attempted to perform their duties through prayer. They do not respect another person's rights to his own beliefs and values.

8) **The ASSERTIVE PERSONALITY:** these individuals state their feelings and needs in a direct yet non-threatening manner. They do not "put down" another person. They behave in a consistent manner and have a strong sense of self.

Disability Character Types

1) **The AGGRESSOR:** these individuals are characterized by being overly demanding and bossy. They show no appreciation to the attendant.

2) **The MARTYR:** this individual's favorite phrase is "Don't worry about me," followed by a big sigh. This attitude encourages feelings of pity and even guilt from the attendant.

3) **The PACIFIST:** this is a passive personality whose main goal is to avoid conflict. This often results in unmet needs because of a fear that the attendant might be angry if asked to perform a task outside the normal routine.

4) **The GUILT-MAKER:** these people have difficulty accepting their disability and attempt to place the blame on others. Their nonverbal message is "Oh, poor me" or "The world owes something to me." Because no one wants to accept the blame or the negative messages from the GUILT-MAKER, there is a tendency to avoid this type of person.

5) **The ROLLERCOASTER:** these people experience extreme mood swings which cause their behavior to be inconsistent. One minute this person is happy, the next, sad. Not knowing what to expect can hinder effective communication.

6) **The DRUG ABUSER:** the handicapped person might behave in an inconsistent manner and/or be unable to assume responsibility for his own care. This puts the burden of care on someone else and is not conducive to the idea of self-direction in independent living.

7) **The PREACHER:** the disabled individual attempts to convert the attendant to accept his/her religious values, interspersing his conversation with quotes from the Bible or other religious doctrine. Again, this person does not respect another person's rights to his own beliefs and values.

8) **The PERFECTIONIST:** these individuals are often described as "picky" by their attendants. Generally, the handicapped person insists that tasks be performed in very specific, detailed ways with no flexibility. Setting realistic priorities might be difficult for this disabled individual.

9) **The ASSERTIVE PERSONALITY:** like assertive attendants, assertive handicapped people are able to express their needs in a direct yet non-threatening manner. They do not manipulate other people. They know themselves and usually have an air of self-assurance.

These descriptions are by no means exhaustive. As you can see, there is an almost infinite variety of pairings in this sample. Some of these pairings are bound to cause conflict while others might prove to be satisfying workable relationships.

Besides possible conflicts caused by different personalities and values, there are also situational conflicts. These are conflicts which occur over specific incidents at specific times. An example of a situational conflict is:

A PCA is helping a handicapped woman dress for work. The woman tells the PCA that she would like to wear her wrap-around skirt today. The PCA chooses another outfit saying it is too much trouble to put on the wrap-around skirt.

Situational conflicts can occur at any time during the day-to-day relationship with your PCA. Another typical example of a situational conflict is:

A disabled person requests to go to bed later than his attendant who shares his apartment.

How do you resolve these conflicts? Each person's response to a conflict situation is important. There are three basic ways to respond to any situation: (1) **the passive response,** (2) **the aggressive response,** and (3) **the assertive response.** These response patterns and their consequences can best be illustrated using the two examples of situational conflicts above.

Situation A: *A PCA is helping a handicapped woman dress for work. The woman tells the PCA that she would like to wear her wrap-around skirt today. The PCA chooses another outfit saying it is too much trouble to put on the wrap-around skirt.*

1) **Passive Response**—The handicapped woman passively accepts her attendant's decision to choose another outfit for her. **Consequence:** the disabled woman loses the control over her own life and relinquishes her right to make her own decisions. The PCA achieves her goal at the expense of the handicapped woman.

2) **Aggressive response**—The handicapped woman "blows up" at her PCA, calling the PCA names and perhaps complaining about other grievances. **Consequence:** the handicapped woman depreciates her attendant and achieves her goal through anger. The PCA on the other hand, feels hurt, defensive, and humiliated. There is a possibility of retaliation.

3) **Assertive response**—The handicapped woman politely but firmly restates her wish to wear the wrap-around skirt and expresses her reasons. **Consequence:** the handicapped woman chooses for herself and feels good about herself. The PCA understands the feelings of the handicapped woman and may increase sensitivity to her needs.

Situation B: *A disabled person requests to go to bed later than his attendant who shares his apartment.*

1) **Passive response**—The handicapped person meekly succumbs to the PCA, rearranges his plans and goes to bed at the same time as his PCA. **Consequence:** the handicapped person feels resentment and anger towards the PCA. The PCA may be unaware that there is a problem so that there is no opportunity for open discussion and/or compromises.

2) **Aggressive response**—The handicapped person loudly proclaims that he doesn't care what time the PCA goes to bed and that he is going "out" and doesn't know when he will return. He purposely slams the door as he leaves. **Consequence:** the PCA is angry because the handicapped person has not considered his needs. The PCA decides to retaliate by making the handicapped person wait several hours after he returns before helping him to bed.

3) **Assertive response**—The handicapped person explains his need to stay up later than the PCA. They agree to perform most of their nightly routine early in the evening so that the actual process of going to bed will take a minimal amount of time. **Consequence:** through compromise both the handicapped individual and the PCA get their needs met. No one's feelings are hurt.

As you can see, not only is it important that your PCA understand your needs but it is equally important that you understand your PCA's needs. The assertive response is the most honest way of dealing with conflict situations; using assertiveness can lead to effective compromises where each person involved contributes and is comfortable with the resulting solution. Open and direct communication will facilitate understanding but is not guaranteed to get you what you want. Being an assertive person takes practice. Remember that you can only control and be responsible for your own responses. Even if you are honest and direct, your PCA could respond passively or aggressively.

In any relationship it is important to project what the possible consequences of your actions are. Sometimes you may respond passively or choose to ignore a comment or action because the end result is not that important to you. For example, does it really matter to you that your PCA wears torn blue jeans to work and you prefer a neater appearance? On the other hand, there may be times when you feel so strongly about a situation that you might be willing to risk damaging the relationship in order to defend your values. For instance, suppose your PCA wants to use your apartment to store his/her marijuana and you don't want anything to do with it. Are you willing to risk losing your PCA by being aggressive about your feelings concerning this matter? Your response to any situation is an individual choice. Each set of actions will require individual consideration and evaluation.

BACK-UP SYSTEMS

Many handicapped people avoid confrontations with their attendant because of an overriding fear that the PCA will retaliate through neglecting responsibilities or by simply abandoning the disabled individual. It is a common mistake for the handicapped person to depend solely on one or two PCA's with no allowances for the PCA to become ill, develop transportation problems, get weathered in, or experience some other type of emergency. Although adequate notice for time off or for leaving the job should be negotiated at the time the PCA is hired, there are occasions when prior notice of absence cannot be given. For this reason, it seems imperative that you have a back-up plan in mind if not one that is actually written down. Having a reliable back-up plan can also substantially reduce fears of abandonment by a PCA who might become angry at something you do or say. A back-up system assures that you are able to remain in control of a situation.

There are probably several sources of temporary back-up help available in your own community. In large cities, medical personnel services are a prime resource for nurse's aides and LVN's. Although these services can often be expensive (over $5 per hour) the aides are usually available on short notice. Another possibility is that nursing homes might be willing to refer aides who want to earn extra money during their off duty hours. Once you have tested various back-up systems it would be a good idea to keep a running list of names and telephone numbers of people you find to be reliable and the times that they are available. Some handicapped people regularly call the people on their list "just to chat" in order to maintain a friendly contact and to make sure their schedules haven't changed.

There are several informal and probably less expensive back-up systems besides medical personnel services. These include family or nearby relatives, friends, neighbors, and previous attendants. Your PCA might even be willing to find his/her own substitute.
It's worth asking!

TERMINATING YOUR PCA

Terminating an employee is rarely a pleasant experience. There can be many reasons for terminating a PCA from consistent inability to follow instructions, to consistent tardiness, to not showing up for work at all. A key word here is **"consistent."** Generally, the PCA should be told about an existing problem situation or behavior and then be given a specified time in which to correct the problem. To avoid misunderstandings about your expectations of an attendant from the beginning of the relationship it is a good idea to establish a written contract. A sample functional skills evaluation form can be found in the appendix of this booklet and is a useful guide when drawing up a contract. Both you and your PCA should have a copy of the contract which you both sign. The contract is simply a way to be clear about the expectations and responsibilities of an attendant and a handicapped person. Many handicapped people who wish to have an informal relationship with their attendant choose not to have a formal, written contract; they rely instead on good verbal communication to make their needs known. You will need to evaluate for yourself which style fits you. However, should it be necessary to terminate your PCA, it is often helpful to be able to produce a written agreement to support your reasons for termination.

Finding the words to tell someone you no longer need their services is not easy. One handicapped woman says something like, *"This arrangement is not working out as I had hoped. I feel that I need to locate someone else who is more compatible to my lifestyle and my needs."* Unless the reason for termination is intolerable, the PCA should be given one to two weeks notice of the end of the job. Sometimes your PCA will choose to leave at the first sign of dissatisfaction causing you to rely on your planned back-up system.

If you are in doubt about whether or not to terminate your PCA, consider this rule of thumb: if your attendant is consistently interferring with or hindering your daily activities then you should think about finding someone else who is more compatible. After all, the purpose of having a PCA is to enable you to live a relatively normal life. If your PCA does not assist you in reaching this goal, he/she essentially becomes another disability with which to contend.

Appendix

Functional Assessment

	Yes	No	Comments
Equipment			
ramp			
shower/commode chair			
raised toilet seat			
lift			
sliding board			
hospital bed			
corset/elastic stockings			
Transportation			
driver's permit			
driver's license			
vehicle?			

Ambulation Status

	Dependent	Assisted	Independent	Comments
Cane				
level surfaces				
ramp				
curb				
stairs				
escalator				
Crutches				
level surfaces				
ramp				
curb				
stairs				
escalator				

Functional Status

	Dependent	Assisted	Independent	Comments
Self Care				
empty leg bag				
eating				
upper body dressing				
total dressing				
showering				
washing face				
brushing teeth				
shaving/make-up				
writing				
typing				
putting on orthosis				
weight shift				
other _____				
Transfers				
wheelchair to bed				
wheelchair to toilet				
wheelchair to shower chair				
wheelchair to bathtub				

	Yes	No	Comments
Mobility			
manual wheelchair			
level			
ramps			
curb			
electric wheelchair			
level			
ramp			

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This is one of three booklets in a series about Independent Living and Attendant Care. The titles in the series are:

Independent Living With Attendant Care: A Guide for the Person With A Disability

Independent Living With Attendant Care: A Message to Parents of Handicapped Youth

Independent Living With Attendant Care: A Guide for the Personal Care Attendant

The content of each booklet is a result of three years experience in the New Options Transitional Living Program at The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research (TIRR), Houston, Texas. The material was gathered from New Options participants, staff associates, attendants, and families who shared their personal experiences. Each booklet is intended to be a guide with suggestions that can be adapted to each individual's situation.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Mary Ann Board has a background in Social Work and was the Personal Independence Counselor in the New Options program.

Jean A. Cole, Director of Education at TIRR, was the Project Director of New Options.

Lex Frieden, Director of the Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) Project at TIRR, was the Research Director in New Options.

Jane C. Sperry has a background in Physical Therapy and was the Functional Skills Advisor in the New Options program.